

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB PO

SUBJ: GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION STRUCK

1. GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION HAS BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE JULY 18. EMPLOYEES HAVE TAKEN OVER PREMISES AND LOCKED ALL OFFICES. STRIKERS ARE DEMANDING RESIGNATION OF THREE MEMBERS OF BOARD OF ADMINISTRATORS, HIGHER SALARIES, REORGANIZATION OF GULBENKIAN OPERATIONS WITH EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DECISION-MAKING.

2. MANAGEMENT WILLING TO DISCUSS SALARIES AND EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION, BUT DIGGING IN ITS HEELS ON DEMAND FOR RESIGNATIONS.

3. THREE BOARD MEMBERS WHOSE RESIGNATION DEMANDED ARE MARCELO MATIAS, FORMER AMBASSADOR, WHO WAS MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN SALAZAR REGIME; ENGINEER LOBATO GUIMARAES, ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF BULBENKIAN COMPLEX; AND DR. SA MACHADO, ADMINISTRATOR IN CHARGE OF PERSONNEL.

4. ACTIVITIES OF FOUNDATION ARE AT A STANDSTILL. ALL PERFORMANCES CANCELLED. GULBENKIAN ORCHESTRA AND BALLET GROUP, ON TOUR IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL AND
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YUGOSLAVIA, INTERRUPTED TOUR AND HAVE RETURNED TO LISBON.

5. GULBENKIAN BOARD ISSUED STATEMENT DECLARING STRIKE ILLEGAL. MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES HAVE VISITED FOUNDATION. CASE HAS NOW BEEN TURNED OVER TO MINISTRY OF LABOR.

6. COMMENT: CHIEF OF CABINET OF MINISTRY OF FINANCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT GULBENKIAN CASE IS A TEST FOR GOVERNMENT. GULBENKIAN IS PRIVATE CORPORATION. ISSUE IN STRIKES AGAINST OTHER PRIVATE CORPORATIONS (E.G., APPLIED MAGNETICS) HAS BEEN OVER EMPLOYEES' RIGHT TO FORCE PERSONNEL CHANGES UPON MANAGEMENT. PRINCIPLE IS SAME IN GULBENKIAN CASE ALTHOUGH DIMENSION OF CASE SOMEWHAT BROADER. FOUNDATION EMPLOYS 1500 PEOPLE IN LISBON ALONE. FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES AFFECT QUALITY OF CULTURAL LIFE IN PORTUGAL AND HENCE QUESTION RAISED WHETHER IT IS A NATIONAL ASSET. FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN, AZEREDO PERDIGAO, WHO ALSO A MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF STATE, TAKES POSITION THAT FOUNDATION IS PRIVATE AND THAT MFA PROGRAM DOES NOT INCLUDE PURGE OF PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS. FOUNDATION BOARD THEREFORE IS REFUSING TO YIELD TO EMPLOYEE DEMANDS. THERE IS A REPORT BUT ONLY A REPORT THAT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR MAY ASSIGN A COMMITTEE TEMPORARILY TO SUPERVISE FOUNDATION OPERATIONS.
POST

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